

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application. Support for new claims 3-10 is found at pages 4-5 of the specification. All of the presently pending claims find full support in disclosure of the present application and it is requested that all of the above amendments be entered of record.

Submission of Verified English Translation of Priority Document to Perfect Claim to Priority

Enclosed with this Reply is a verified English translation of the priority document for the present application. Upon submission of this priority document, applicants hereby perfect their claim to priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 such that the effective priority date of the present application is February 20, 2001 with regard to all of the presently pending claims.

Removal of Issues under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being unpatentable Matsuda '976 (USP 6,500,976). The basis for this rejection has been removed upon the submission of the above-noted priority documents. Since Matsuda '976 has a filing date of October 5, 2001 which is later than the perfected priority date of the present application of February 20, 2001, Matsuda '976 is

removed as potential prior art. Therefore, the above-noted rejection should be withdrawn.

It is submitted for the reasons stated that the present claims define patentable subject matter such that this application should now proceed towards allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicant(s) respectfully petition(s) for a one (1) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$110.00 is attached hereto.

Appl. No. 10/077,886

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment(s): Verified English translation of priority document